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COMMONWEALTH DEDICATES \$22.5 MILLION TO RETROFIT ALL SCHOOL, TRANSIT BUSES IN THE STATE

Agreement reaffirms state commitment to construction of Silver Line Phase III

Environmental Affairs Secretary Robert W. Gollidge Jr., Transportation Secretary John Cogliano and Department of Environmental Protection Acting Commissioner Arleen O'Donnell today announced the dedication of \$22.5 million to retrofit 8400 public school and regional transit buses in the state by 2010.

The agreement is a key component in the state's efforts to reduce the health impacts of diesel fuel emissions. Diesel emissions pose a number of short and long-term health impacts, including asthma, bronchitis, heart disease and lung cancer. Retrofitting school buses is especially important as the children who ride them are particularly susceptible to damage as their lungs are not yet fully developed.

The diesel retrofit initiative, an agreement between the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), and the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), also reaffirms the Commonwealth's commitment to urban transit expansion with the construction of Silver Line Phase III.

"This agreement reflects the Commonwealth's commitment to ensure that the air quality impacts of the Central Artery Project are effectively mitigated," Secretary Gollidge said. "The completion of the Silver Line tunnel connection linking South Station, Boylston Street and the New England Medical Center will improve both transit and air quality."

"The Romney Administration has worked proactively to develop environmental solutions that get to the core of the problem, and this is a case study in that sentiment," said Transportation Secretary John Cogliano. "This \$22.5 million investment will ensure that thousands of buses across the state are cleaner, greener, and more responsive to our environmental needs."

“This agreement will help to further the state’s efforts to reduce the health impacts of diesel fuel emissions,” said MassDEP Acting Commissioner Arleen O’Donnell. “Consistent with MassDEP’s Clean Schools Initiative, this diesel bus retrofit project will not only help to protect school children, but will greatly improve air quality in the Commonwealth.”

“This bold move by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will have tremendous impacts for children with asthma across the state,” said Laurie Stillman, Executive Director of the Asthma Regional Council. “Massachusetts can be proud that it is now in the forefront of tackling one of the most nefarious contributors to asthma.”

“This is an absolute homerun for our kids’ health and the air we all breathe. The Diesel Pollution Solution (DPS) coalition applauds this terrific first step to maximize health by retrofitting diesel fleets statewide,” said Sam Krasnow, Policy Advocate & Attorney for Environment Northeast. The Diesel Pollution Solution is a growing coalition comprised of more than a dozen grassroots and environmental groups such as Environment Northeast, ACE (Roxbury), Chelsea Green Space, Clean Water Action, Masspirg, Greater Four Corners (Dorchester), and NEON in Springfield – advocating for 75% PM reductions in priority fleets by 2010 to improve public health.

The agreement states that EOT and the MBTA will complete a Silver Line grant agreement with the Federal Transit Administration by December 31, 2010, and the MBTA will complete construction of the Silver Line Phase III by December 2016.

EOT will commit \$22.5 million to retrofit all diesel powered regional transit and public schools buses in the state by September 30, 2010. EOT will provide \$7.5 million annually in 2007, 2008 and 2009 to accomplish that goal.

Further conditions of the agreement include:

- EOT will direct \$125,000 to the MBTA to perform additional testing of locomotive diesel oxidation catalysts on T commuter rail locomotives. Once tested and approved, EOT will direct an additional \$125,000 to the MBTA to install diesel oxidation catalysts on commuter rail locomotives; and
- The continued implementation and compliance with the MHD off-road construction equipment diesel retrofit program, certifying that all contractor equipment over 50 horsepower, that is used on state construction projects, has been diesel retrofitted.

For more information about diesel emission reduction efforts and the health impacts of diesel exhaust, turn to: www.mass.gov/dep/air/community/schbusir.htm

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